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*Holiness Writers*

# **FROM SINKING SANDS**

By

*Harry J. Elliott*

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without  
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

**Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The day of miracles is not past! In fact, every redeemed life is a living testimonial of the miraculous power of God's grace. Sometimes, however, God reaches down into the cess-pools of vice and sin to pick up a man or woman who has completely sold out to the Devil. Such a person, when saved, cleaned up, sanctified, and sent out to rescue others from a Devil's hell is indeed a "living epistle, known and read of all men."

Evangelist Harry J. Elliott has written a brief account of his life in a thirty-six-page booklet under the above title. He tells of his childhood days and God's faithfulness in leading him out from sin into a life of usefulness and blessing to others.

The story is told in a simple, heart-to-heart fashion that can not fail to touch and stir the heart. Evangelist Elliott has told his experience to thousands, but through this little book multitudes who will never hear the story from his own lips may read the printed pages and be blessed by added faith in God and inspiration to seek the lost; or by conviction of sin and encouragement to seek God, whichever the case may be.

Be sure to read this book for your own edification and if you know of some discouraged, sin-sick soul, who is enslaved by the chains of habit and vice, place a copy in his or her hands.

# **FROM SINKING SANDS**

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## **CONTENTS**

### **CHAPTER 1**

Birth and Childhood

### **CHAPTER 2**

Bound Out

### **CHAPTER 3**

Quincy Once More

### **CHAPTER 4**

First Position as a Cook

### **CHAPTER 5**

Trying to Break Loose

### **CHAPTER 6**

Return to City Life

### **CHAPTER 7**

Two Years of Happiness

### **CHAPTER 8**

Became Bartender Again

### **CHAPTER 9**

At Chicago

### **CHAPTER 10**

Back to Railroading

### **CHAPTER 11**

Hotel Life

### **CHAPTER 12**

Leaving All for Gambling

### **CHAPTER 13**

In Colorado

CHAPTER 14  
My Conversion

CHAPTER 15  
My First Revival Service

CHAPTER 16  
At Colorado Springs

CHAPTER 17  
"Old Man" Shows Himself

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## CHAPTER 1 BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

I was born in Quincy, Ill., September 3, 1870. Mother's death took place when I was one and one-half years of age. Father worked at bridge building in St. Joe, Mo., and perished in the going down of the bridge.

It is said of my mother that she passed out of this world singing the praises of God; and from the evidences she left, no doubt she was a saved woman.

Previous to my father's death, he had James, my brother, with him, and had a lady taking care of us; but on account of not being able to look after both of us, my Aunt Nellie took me and cared for me as one of her own children.

I lived with my Aunt Nellie until six years of age, when grandma thought she was undertaking too much, and being a very devout Roman Catholic, thought it best to place me in a Catholic orphans' home, very much in opposition to my aunt's wishes.

As mother's death occurred while I was only a babe, I could never tell the difference between my aunt's love for me, and that of a mother's. And now, being in the orphans' home, away from all that I knew in childhood, there came that lonesomeness in my heart which only an orphan knows.

I was in the home but a short time till I became sick, and up to nine years of age spent the most of my time in the baby's ward. It seemed that I took everything that was going in the line of sickness, even sore eyes. My brother James tells me that for six months while I was in the school I was stone blind. Kind hands did all they could for me, the other children in the home prayed for me, but the physician's skill failed to open my eyes.

Grandmother took a trip to Scotland and while there was told by a very pious person that as long as everything had failed, if she would take a certain ointment and anoint the eyes of her grandson in Jesus' name, while the children of the school fasted and prayed, that the eyes might be opened.

With this hope in view grandma came back from Scotland, reported to the head sister of the home what was told her in regard to the ointment, and at once a day was appointed for fasting and prayer. The whole school prayed, my eyes were anointed in Jesus' name, and strange to relate, but true to the facts, I have it to record that my sight returned. I could see once more. This was a time of rejoicing among the children as well as among others.

# FROM SINKING SANDS

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## CHAPTER 2 BOUND OUT

It was a great day of sorrow in my life when the sister superior called me to her office and told me, "Henry (for that was the name they gave me instead of Harry), we have a great surprise for you. You know, Henry, that grandma gave us the privilege, when we found a good place, to have you bound out. We have at last found such a place. It is in a beautiful part of the country, where you can ride horses, milk cows, feed the chickens, plow, and be a real farmer boy."

This sounded good, but boylike, I did not want to go till I had seen brother Jim, dear grandma, Aunt Nellie, Uncle John, and my cousins. However, my tears availed me nothing, for in a few hours I was on my way to the depot, and was hurried off to my new home. However, the newness of everything, the long train ride, and the thirty-six miles horseback helped me to forget in a measure the things I had left behind.

A few days after being on the farm the longing for the old associations began tugging at my heart strings, and struggle against it as I would, many hours I spent crying; but always the dear man I was living with, Mr. Shay, would tell me it wouldn't be long till I would be twenty-one, and I could have my horse and bridle, my saddle, and a hundred dollars. But these words of encouragement would only last a few days and my poor heart would be weeping for Jim and the rest of the loved ones.

At last Mrs. Shay said to her husband, "I told you that you oughn't to have gotten a city chap, for you can not make a farmer out of one of them." But I thought I was a pretty good farmer boy, up and doing my chores at five, and finding plenty to do till dark.

On account of my sickness and sore eyes at the orphans' home, I had no opportunity for schooling, so now I had the privilege as a farmer boy of going to school four months of the year. This was one of the little old-fashioned, log cabin schoolhouses, and it seemed the only happy times I had were these four months when I would be with the children at the school; but when school days were over I would always begin to rebel and want Mr. Shay to take me to Quincy to see my brother Jim. He always put me off with the saying, "If you are a good boy this year I will take you next year."

Among the many things that took place in my life as a farmer boy I will refer to one. In the days of my farm life we used to haul hayshocks with a horse and rope. While drawing a shock into the haystack the rope slipped from underneath the shock. I got off the mule to replace the rope around it when my feet got tangled in the rope, and away went the mule dragging me about a quarter of a mile, and when I was untangled from the rope I was picked up for dead. I was taken to the house wounded and bruised, but no need for a physician to come to a poor orphan boy.

I made up my mind that if I didn't leave the farm life soon, with all the accidents I was having, I would never see Jim; so I told Mr. Shay if he wanted me to stay with him till I was twenty-one, he

would have to give me leave of absence to go and see my loved ones. Again he promised me as usual, but my faith had been shaken so many times that one day while plowing for oats, in the middle of the morning, I unhitched my horses, took them to the barn, and went to the house. Mr. Shay said, "What is the trouble, Henry?" I said, "I will never plow another lick until you let me go and see Jim and grandma," and though threatened with the rawhide, I had gotten to a place where rawhides or any other kind of punishment were as nothing to me if I could but once more be in my Aunt Nellie's home, hear her welcoming voice, and feel her arms around me, telling me she still loved me; for this was the one thing I lacked at this place the love for which all children long.

Now, when he saw I was desperate about going, he said, "Very well, I will help you to get ready and you may go tomorrow, but must be back in one month." So bright and early the next morning we started on our twenty-four mile trip in the old farm wagon, and all the way Mr. Shay would say, "Now Henry, you musn't forget to come back," and while I said "I will be back," I had made up my mind it all depended upon what Aunt Nellie said.

At last we were in the city and I was aboard the train, off for Quincy, Ill,



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## CHAPTER 3 QUINCY, ILL., ONCE MORE

If you could have been at the C., B. & Q. depot when this farmer boy stepped off the train, you would have seen one of the happiest boys who ever put his feet in that city. After I told the hackman who I was, and that I wanted to find Uncle John Riley's home, it looked as if all the hackmen wanted to help me. So the farmer boy was at last getting into a hack, making his way to the home of his Uncle John and Aunt Nellie and cousins.

It was early in the morning when I arrived and not one was out of bed; but when they answered the bell and found it was Harry, the whole household was up; and what a rejoicing time was had in the return of the orphan boy! for it had been four long years, without a letter passing from one to the other, except one notice which I received of Cousin Laura's death.

While my heart rejoiced in being in the home of my dear aunt, who loved me as her own dear son, yet my heart was made sad to know that Jim was not there. Dear grandma, who was making her home with my Aunt Nellie, told me that Jim had been away for some time and had just returned, but left day before yesterday, for no one knew where.

They told me after I had been sent to Mr. Shay's that Jim was very much put out with the sisters and the priest and all of them for sending me away. He said, "Didn't you know that I was old enough to make money and take care of my own brother and send him to school, without sending him away where I may never see him again?"

After trying to find out from the priest where they had sent me, and being refused this knowledge, James came to grandma and would give her no peace till she told him where they sent me. At last she said, "All I know, James, is that he is with a man by the name of Shay near Palmyra, Mo." So Jim, being three years older than I, started for Palmyra, and everybody he would meet in Palmyra he would ask, "Do you know a man by the name of Shay? He has my brother and I want him." But nobody seemed to know a Mr. Shay, or where the orphan boy Harry was.

Boys who have their parents don't know what the heart of an orphan feels, and when orphan brothers' hearts are tied together, how hard it is to separate them?

After hard days of travel and search in and around Palmyra, looking for his brother, James gave it up and came back to the city, and after a few years of working in stores, discouraged on account of the separation, he started for the West, not to be heard of again for some time.

After I had been in Quincy a few days and Aunt Nellie knew of my life on the farm, she said, "You shall not go back again." Not wanting to be a burden to any one and being a strong boy of fourteen, I started out to make my own living.

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## CHAPTER 4 MY FIRST POSITION AS A COOK

You may think it strange that a boy starting out at fourteen, coming right from the farm, would find a position as a cook, but let me tell you something about what kind of a cook I was. I was what they call third cook. You may not know what a third cook is. He is one who washes the pans and kettles, and keeps all vessels clean and in readiness for the first cook.

This position was all right as long as I stayed in my place as third cook; but in connection with this restaurant was a saloon, and it was not long till I began to spend more time in the saloon than I ought.

Here was where I had my first drink; here was where I drew my first glass of beer; here was where I dished out my first drink of whisky, and where I began to smoke. I was no longer the farmer boy, living where there was nothing of this, but now a full-fledged city chap and to be one of the boys I had to do as the others did. Many a time I wished I had never left the farm, for I came from the farm strong; but now I could see I was becoming weak. I worked hard all day, was up late evenings, playing cards, and drinking, and I woke up at last to the fact that the city life was not the best life for an orphan boy.

Reader, whoever you may be, orphan boy or not, no matter how badly you may need a position, never accept one which has a saloon in connection with it, for no doubt I would not have been the boy I was at this time had I taken a place where there was no saloon. Shun it as you would a viper, for the first cup of liquor is the most expensive. There is death in the cup.

Two things kept me from drinking as much as I might otherwise. Lack of money, and respect for my people. Though my drinking and card playing was much of it done secretly, yet its effect were becoming visible. It was beginning to tell on me.

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## CHAPTER 5 TRYING TO BREAK LOOSE

When I began to see what a young man ought to be, I knew that there would have to be a change in my life or I would go the way I saw many others going. What to do I did not know. I had planned on many things, but at last I decided the best place for me would be the farm life. So early one morning I notified my Aunt Nellie that I was sick and tired of city life and I was going back to the farm.

The next morning I packed a small grip, took the car, and rode out as far as the city limits. I planned to stop at every house till somebody would hire me. From almost sunrise till after sundown I traveled through dust and heat, to be told at about twenty-five places, "You are too young for a farm hand." Discouraged and almost desperate I came near returning to the city, but I had started to find a place on the farm and made up my mind I would have one if it was only to work for my board.

Becoming too dark to travel any more, I stopped at a farmhouse, inquiring if they wanted to hire a man, and they said that Mr. A. was in the city not to return till late, but that if I was a stranger in the community I might stay overnight. Here was my chance. Late in the evening, the man of the house absent and the women doing the work, I said, "Let me do that." In fact, I insisted on it. So I pulled off my coat and milked the cows, got in the wood, and worked for about an hour and a half as hard as I ever worked, and that was my recommendation.

When Mr. A. returned and was told I was looking for a place, he said, "Well, I am glad, for I have looked all day for a hand to come out here and help me put up a fence around the farm." But when he saw me he said, "I thought the folks said there was a man here, but you are only a boy." I said, "Yes sir, I am only sixteen, but if you will give me a chance I will prove to you that I can swing the maul and drive fence posts and do all the work of a man." He said, "Well, you are pretty game, young fellow, and must want a job awful bad." "Sir," I said, "I don't know what it is to be idle, as I have worked nearly every day since I was nine years old."

The next day he put me to work; but oh, how glad I was for sundown. He could see that the work was very heavy for me, but Providence had placed me in the hands of a tender-hearted man and while with him he treated me as his own son.

After a number of days on the farm I began to crave for city life, the old haunts, the companions, and liquor. I fought the burning and nagging within for awhile, but at last I returned to the city to satisfy my craving appetite.

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## **CHAPTER 6 RETURN TO THE CITY LIFE**

I had not been in the city many days till I met a friend of mine who owned a pool hall in a saloon in the city. He said, "Harry, I want you to go to work for me," and as much as I tried to refuse, he overpersuaded me and I went to work as the caretaker of the pool tables. I worked at this position quite awhile, until one day a man who was drunk, who hadn't seen me for some time, said, "Hello, kid, where have you been?" at the same time letting the heavy butt of his cue fall on my head, splitting it open. After I was brought to consciousness, I said to the saloon keeper, "You may get another boy for your pool hall, for I am not ready to die." So he discharged me and hired me over, but this time to tend bar.

The life of the barroom, the music of the hall, the gayety of theaters, the company of those I was with, seemed to destroy for a time all longing for the farm life. There seemed nothing at all that would please and satisfy me but the gayest of the gay, exciting times at the gambling table, saloon fights, the more of them the better. But being a young boy the life became so strenuous I was not able to keep up the pace, and lost my position as bartender.

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## **CHAPTER 7 TWO YEARS OF HAPPINESS**

A friend of my uncle's was in Quincy, Ill., about two weeks after I stopped tending bar, and said to uncle, "Do you know where I can get a young man to go with me to Springfield?" He answered, "Yes, I have a friend; just the young man you want." I was introduced to him and hired out to him as his coachman.

This was something new for me, but being a lover of horses it was not long till I loved my work.

These people were opposed to intoxicants' and gave me to understand that whenever I began to drink or go with the saloon crowd, my services would no longer be needed.

I felt that the position and the kindness of these people were worth much more to me than the saloon life, so I vowed to them that I would not drink or keep such company. So they trusted their children with me anywhere, and the reason that I say these were two years of happiness was because I was away from the saloon life and its temptations, and under the influence of these good people. They not only instructed their own sons and daughters in the ways of temperance, but they also took time to talk on this subject to the coachman.

One day I made the acquaintance of a young man. We became fast friends and not long after this I was down with him in the saloons. My employers, true to their word, gave me to understand that they needed me no longer.

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### **CHAPTER 8 HOW I BECAME A BARTENDER AGAIN**

After being discharged from this good home I learned here was a man at the hotel looking for young men to travel with the Soapine company. This being something new I thought I would try it. Our work consisted of advertising the town and then disposing of the goods from house to house. Working on commission I made a great deal of money, but the company of traveling men with whom I worked were all drinking men and gamblers. After three months of this work, we arrived in Quincy, Ill.

In a few days before finishing our work at Quincy, a friend of mine met me and said, "You are the man I am looking for. I have just started a saloon down here on Broadway, and want you for one of the bartenders." Thus, being in with this class of people paved the way for an offer of this kind, and I accepted the position.

If the word respectable can be at all applied to the saloon business, I can say that I soon found out after being in this saloon for a week or two, that the saloons I had been in before were quite respectable compared to this.

Here, that which was in me before that desired to be a man, seemed to become quite deadened. I did not long to get away from the saloon life or the saloon element as I had before. My aunt and all my relatives had moved to Chicago and there was no one who was interested in me to advise me concerning such a life.

The rooms upstairs were used for gambling rooms, and here were business men in the different professions to be found at the gambling tables, night after night, till they seemed to be crazed or set on fire with this life of gambling. From this place men went to become forgers, holdup men, safe blowers, and everything that gambling leads to, even the breaking up of homes. Men who started in this gambling hell, some of them fathers with all that goes to make a man happy, went from the gambling table into places of shame, and when they came to their senses and saw their sin, they could not face their families, and thus many homes were broken up and separations took place. But something intervened to save me from this life of sin. The man who owned the saloon got into trouble and had to leave the country to avoid arrest. This left the business in my hands, and being but a young boy the brewery company took the business in their own hands and I was free again.

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## CHAPTER 9 AT CHICAGO

After losing my position at Quincy, I wrote to Uncle John. He wrote for me to come there, and as he was yardmaster he could get me a place on the road. I made haste and arrived in Chicago, and was once more in the home of my aunt and cousins and grandma. The influence of this home had a great deal to do in causing me to give up the saloon life, for some time. Railroading became very fascinating, and Aunt Nellie made the home such that I was glad to have the evening come that I might get back and enjoy its comforts.

Here was where I first began to lay up a bank account, and having a good salary and only spending money for my board it was not long till I had saved quite a few dollars.

You would think after the experiences I had had in saloons I would be willing to accept almost any kind of a position rather than ever to see a saloon again. I had made vows and signed pledges that I would never drink or enter a saloon again, but there came such craving that once more I sacrificed everything that was dear to me for the position of a bartender. I once more began tending bar on Twelfth and State streets, in the city of Chicago. I was not yet twenty-one.

After a few nights in my position I was tempted to leave; for it was a common thing to find men dead in the morning on the street, and sometimes even women. When I said I was going to leave the place and quit that work, some of the men who were more hardened to it, said, "Young man, be game and stick her out." I didn't want to show the white feather, so stayed on.

After almost a year in this place something occurred that, among the many others that tempted me to leave, was what decided me. One afternoon there came into the saloon a young woman and ordered a bottle of wine. The porter being absent, I had to wait on her. Seated at the table the story she told me caused me to think. It was this:

"I am not a woman of the street, as possibly you may think. I am a woman in society. Let me tell you why I am here. When I first entered society my people gave out invitations for a large social gathering in honor of the event. Wine was to be served and I was instructed that I must partake of it in order that no one might feel embarrassed. I did so, and liked it, and partook again and again until before the evening was over I began to feel very queerly.

"The next day, wishing for some more, I partook again and became intoxicated. My mother, on finding this out, locked all the wine up. I then did what I never did before, I became a thief. I broke open the locks and drank all I wished. When this was found out, the wine was removed entirely from the house. I then bribed the coachman to bring me drinks. He did so, but this was discovered, he was discharged, and another hired. I bribed him also, and this is why I am here; and as long as you protect

me from others who frequent this place, and give me your word you will not try to find out who I am, I will get my wine here and pay you for it."

The story of this young woman brought forcibly to my mind again the fact that this was not the kind of life a young man ought to live. I thought, what if this was one of my own loved ones or relatives, and as this thought came to me I made up my mind again that I would get out of the saloon business.



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## CHAPTER 10 BACK TO RAILROADING

My uncle, finding that I had given up the saloon, offered me a position in the railroad yard. I began work again as switch tender for a few months, when I was advanced to the work of switchman. I worked at this less than a month, when one night making a coupling, my left arm was crushed between two Lackawanna deadwoods.

They hurried me to the hospital where I lay for four months. My uncle, who had given me the position, would call on me at the hospital almost every morning on his way to his work. It looked as if the doctors would have to take off my arm, until one of the leading surgeons said to my uncle, "The arm can be saved, but it will never be much use." So Uncle John stood by me and said he would do everything in his power to see me through. But he had a bigger job on his hands than he thought when he made that statement, for the company physician insisted that the arm must come off, so this caused an unexpected fight.

With all the skill of the doctors and nurses I became a very sick boy. They thought for a time that I would not live. My uncle one morning on entering the hospital was told by one of the sisters that Harry had passed away. He came to the room and pulling the sheet down from my head stood gazing into my face, when he imagined he saw signs of life. Putting his hand under my head he raised it up, when I gave a cough. This seemed to loosen some obstruction which lay on my lungs and breast and I continued to cough till a very large quantity of corruption had been thrown up. Previous to this time I had lain for fifteen days without any nourishment other than a little wine, and so near death's door that it was an easy matter to believe I had passed out of this life.

Uncle's first words were, "Harry, I thought you were dead." I answered, "Who said I was dead?" He replied, "That was the first news I received when I came in this morning, and when I looked at you I thought you were."

Afterward when alone I began to think, "If it had been so, what would have become of me." My church taught there was a hell for the wicked, and I knew that I was full of sin; so I began to make my preparation as taught in the Catholic faith, that if a relapse came I would be ready.

As soon as I was strong enough to walk the company sent me to their own hospital in Iowa. While at this place I was much surprised to find that the preparations I had made did not take away my desire for gambling and drink, till one day the good doctor said to me, "Young man, what I say to you is for your own good; if you ever expect that arm to heal you must quit your drinking and carousing, and if you do not take heed to this warning we will have to give you a dishonorable discharge." Then I tried hard to quit my drinking and gambling; but one night I was brought to the hospital in an intoxicated condition and the doctor said the rules must be carried out. I pleaded with

them not to give me a dishonorable discharge, but to let me leave the hospital then. He had pity on me and gave me an honorable discharge and let me go.

When I settled with the railroad company I made up my mind I would take the money and go into some business where I would not have to be in touch with the gambling profession; but while they settled with me for a life position and a certain amount of money, I woke up to the fact as soon as the horse race season opened that all my good resolutions were too weak to hold, and I never stopped till I had gambled away every cent I had, very much to the disgust of all my relatives.

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## CHAPTER 11 HOTEL LIFE

Previous to resigning my place in the railroad yards as switch tender, I received a letter from my uncle, telling me he had a letter giving the whereabouts of my brother Jim. I rejoiced in knowing he was still alive and began to correspond with him immediately. I had already begun to plan about going to Montana to see him, for it had been fifteen years since we had heard from one another, when my uncle purchased a hotel and asked me if I would not go to work for him, saying that he would teach me enough about bookkeeping to start me in as night clerk. I took the place.

While in this position I received another letter from Jim telling me of his conversion and sending me his picture dressed in the full uniform of a Salvation Army officer. When I read the letter and looked at the picture I was tempted to tear up the letter and burn the picture, for I felt if I read the letter to grandma and showed her that picture of Jim it would almost send her to the grave. I went to her room and rapped, and receiving no answer I quietly opened the door and saw grandma on her knees. I knew what that meant, that no one was to disturb her when she was in prayer. I returned to the room a number of times and still she was in prayer. The longer I waited the more my blood boiled within me till I could stand it no longer. I went to the room and said, "Pardon me, grandma, but I have a letter from Jim and also his picture." She said, "Oh, I am so glad." I said, "You will not be so glad when you read the letter and see the picture." "Why, has harm come to my boy?" "No, worse than harm, worse than death. He has left mother's faith."

After reading the letter and looking at the picture, she wept, put her arms on my shoulder, and drew me up to her heart, and said, "Harry, fifteen years have I prayed night and day that God would stop him in his wild life and put it into his heart to be a priest, and that my two grandsons might be together."

When I saw that grandma looked at it that way it knocked all the props from under me and I said, "Well, if grandma says it is all right, it must be." So I answered Jim's letter, telling him that I would come and see him soon; but the passion for gambling and the life of gayety had such a hold on me that it seemed I lost all desire to go to him. Still he would write and in his letters tell me about Jesus and how he had no desire for the old gambling life, and telling me some time in the near future to go to one of the Protestant churches and hear a sermon about the personal Savior.

One Sunday morning, after a night of dissipation, I concluded to take Jim's advice and go to a Protestant church; so dressing up in my best I made my way to the first church I could find. After walking up and down in front of the church about twenty times, I at last took courage and entered. The usher took me up toward the front and on entering the pew I found a little bench to kneel on, and prayer books to read from, so I knelt as I had been taught and prayed a prayer. Then I sat down and took the prayer book and read a number of the prayers while the congregation was gathering. All at once one of the side doors of the vestry opened and a number of boys, dressed almost the same as

we did in the old church, marched out. Of course, I thought this was all right, although I had never been in a Protestant church before, for I had served as an altar boy in the Catholic church myself.

I did not think their worship was as beautiful as ours, but I was waiting for the sermon, to hear of the personal Savior. I listened until it was all through and when the benediction was pronounced I went away disappointed, for I had not heard what I had gone to hear.

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Evangelist **Harry J. Elliott**

## CHAPTER 12 LEAVING ALL FOR THE GAMBLING TABLE

I had found this out: That it was impossible to hold a position and follow the gambling table; so I had given up my place as clerk in my uncle's hotel and had gone into the gambling business to get all out of it I could. I frequented the race track, the gambling hall, the poker room at night, until like many another I became almost a physical wreck. My life became such that I was ashamed to meet any of my own kin. In the meantime I received letters again from Jim, inviting me out to see him and telling me how happy he was in his new life and that he had no desire for the old life again.

Things seemed to take a turn for the worse in the gambling room for me until discouraged, weak physically, I thought I would put an end to all; but was not successful in my attempted self-destruction. A little later I said, "I am going out and see what Jim has got." So one cold February night I took my overcoat, said good-by to the boys, went to my room, packed my little grip, and started for Colorado, where my brother was at this time.

I purchased my ticket for Joliet, thinking of stopping off there for a few days, but on arriving at Joliet and stepping off the train I thought, "This is the place where the penitentiary is," and I hurriedly purchased another ticket for Davenport, Iowa, for Joliet was no place for me.

I had not written to James that I was coming, as I desired to surprise him, and arriving in Davenport and registering at the hotel, took a vow that I would neither drink nor gamble till I saw Jim; but like many times previous, inside of two hours I was sitting at a poker game. This time I was unfortunate, and soon lost everything I had, and realized that I was in a strange city without work and without friends.

For three days and nights without anything to eat I hunted for something to do. Finally the manager of a poker room came to me and after some persuasion got me to work for him as a decoy.

Just previous to getting this last place, hungry and discouraged, I had at last got the consent of my mind to have the railroad company wire my brother to send me a ticket. This ticket came two days after I had been working at this place. The manager told me if I would return the ticket and stay with him for awhile, he would pay me \$5 a night and my car fare to Colorado. Luck had been on my side and I was winning in the games as I had never won before, and a voice seemed to say, "You are a fool if you give up this place now, just as you are beginning to get ahead. Stay where you are and get straightened out financially." But after cashing in with the manager, with the whistle of the train sounding in my ears, grip in my hand and teeth clenched, I ran to the station and boarded the train, just as it was pulling out, determined to go and see what Jim had.

# FROM SINKING SANDS

By

Evangelist **Harry J. Elliott**

## CHAPTER 13 IN COLORADO

After a journey of some twelve hundred miles I arrived at the little station of Larkspur, Colo., but very much disappointed not to find brother there to meet me. Upon inquiring of the agent if he knew a man by the name of James Elliott, he said, "Yes sir. He lives about five miles out here in the country and has been over here for the last two days, meeting every train, looking for his brother."

Jim had about given me up, thinking that probably I had changed my mind about coming. When I thought of taking that five-mile trip alone, it made me quite timid. In Chicago, we heard that everything as far west as Colorado was wild and the woods were full of bears and tigers. Also that nearly every one carried pistols to protect themselves from the Indians. After some little delay I thought I would undertake the journey to the mountains, but I would surely keep in the middle of the highway. I had proceeded about a mile when I heard a great stir in the brush. I started on a run as hard as I could go, thinking every moment I would be scalped, or pounced upon by some wild beast, but to my great surprise and relief I found out the noise in the brush was nothing but some gentle cattle; so I took courage and again started on my journey, and after that always looked before I ran.

At last I came to the store at Perry Park and made one more inquiry where Jim Elliott lived and was told he lived about three-quarters of a mile over the hill. When I arrived at the top of the hill and looked down over the field I saw two men putting up ice. They stopped and looked up toward the hill where I was, and one man with a big bushy beard and hickory shirt, blue jeans, and an old slouch hat, started on double-quick time to meet me, and asked as he came up, "Is this Harry Elliott?" and I said, "Is this Jim Elliott?" and if ever two men had a hugging time these orphan boys did in the middle of the road. We wept on one another's neck, for it had been twenty-three years since we had seen each other.

With linked arms Jim took me to his little cabin home and introduced me to Isa, his wife; then to her father, who lay on a bed nigh to death.

As I crossed the threshold of that little home it seemed as though everything was sacred. There seemed to come such a peace and rest to my own heart.

At the meal hour brother returned thanks. That was not new to me, for grandmother always asked God to bless the food, no matter how many people were in the hotel, but this home with brother was so full of new experiences to me. I was tobacco-soaked, whisky-soaked, and sin-soaked when I arrived in the home, but the very look in their faces made me hungry to have what they had. Jim told me of the great things God had done for him and I was much interested.

In the evening after supper, brother said, "Harry, we have family worship at our house and if you desire to tarry with us we would be pleased to have you, but as you are not of our faith we will not

urge you to do so." I said, "What is family worship?" In my training, or lack of training, I had never seen this and wanted to know what it was, so wished to stay. Jim explained they read a chapter in the Bible, then kneeled and thanked God for His care over them during the day, and for His salvation.

I now had the privilege of listening to my first reading from a Protestant Bible, and desired to know much more that was in the Book.

The next morning before starting out Jim said, "We will have family worship first." I said "Again?" "Oh yes," he said, "we always have family worship twice a day at our house, Harry." That morning it seemed as though he must have found something especially for me.

After worship Isa went to the kitchen and brother went out in the yard. I made my way to the shelf where James kept the Bible. I took it down and opened and began to read, "For God so loved the \_\_\_\_\_" when I heard footsteps and I hurriedly replaced the Book. I wanted to again get the Bible and find the place, but I thought such a sinful man as I had no right to handle it, so I longed for the time to come when brother and Isa would again gather in the room where her father was, to read out of that Book and have prayer.

While we all knelt they closed their eyes, but I kept mine open, and they would never forget to tell Jesus of a number of things about Harry and what they wanted Him to do for me. Some things in Isa's prayer I remember yet. She would say, "Dear Jesus, you brought dear Harry all the way from Chicago to us. Help us keep our hands off from him; make us a real blessing to him," and she seemed to get so earnest in her prayer, that I began to look all around the room. You wonder what I was looking for. It was to see if I could see the One to whom she was talking, for I thought no one could talk so earnestly as she unless some one was very near.

# FROM SINKING SANDS

By

Evangelist **Harry J. Elliott**

## CHAPTER 14 MY CONVERSION

My brother Jim, who was a preacher of the gospel, was in Colorado at this time for the purpose of helping to care for his wife's father in his illness, but on Sunday afternoon, about three-quarters of a mile from home, he preached at a schoolhouse. He said to me, "Harry, would you like to hear your brother preach a gospel sermon?" I said, "Yes, Jim, I would be pleased to hear you."

Sunday afternoon I went with my brother to the little schoolhouse and they sang and prayed. I thought everything was so strange. Then brother took the good Book and read some more good news out of it, then began to tell how God had power to save men from sin and what a change takes place in a man's life when he has Christ in his heart. He told how God had saved him from drink and from gambling and from many other things, and I sat there and said in my heart, "I will have this thing that Jim has." While he preached and wept and other folks in the congregation wept, I began to feel I was the meanest man on earth.

After Jim got through preaching he said, "Is there any one here who will raise your hand, signifying that you desire the prayers of God's people that you may be a Christian?" and before I knew what I was doing I raised my hand right up as high as I could raise it. Jim fell on his knees and prayed and cried, then got up and dismissed the congregation and we went home.

After arriving at the house brother walked up to Isa and said something about Harry having a hook in his heart, and Isa began to weep and laugh and look happy and I wondered what a hook in the heart was. That was a day of rejoicing in brother's home. Isa's father seemed to rejoice in it as much as others that Harry had raised his hand for prayers. That evening at family worship I noticed that brother and his wife said nothing to the Lord other than praising Him for the way He was looking after Harry and the way He was leading him. Afterward, Jim instructed me more thoroughly as to how to find Christ and about two evenings after raising my hand in the schoolhouse, I dropped on my knees in my own room after family prayer, and wept before the Lord, telling Him I wanted what Jim had; but it seemed as though all the sins I had ever committed in all my life rolled on top of me and for a few minutes I seemed sorry I had ever started to find what Jim had, for here now I was face to face with God. I had to confess to Him everything. I could not leave out a sin; but I had no more than said, "Lord, I will quit the whole thing; I want what Jim has; I want Christ in my heart," when the whole burden of sin rolled away and I became a new creature. I began to rejoice in my room for the peace God gave me in my heart, knowing at last beyond the shadow of a doubt that all desire for the old life had gone. Isa and Jim out in the other room knew what took place immediately. There was a great campmeeting going on in that cabin. Not only did angels rejoice, but dear grandpa, who was lying close to death's door, joined in with the rest and rejoiced.

I said to Jim the next day after my conversion, "Why didn't somebody tell me this long ago?"



As I would walk out in the fields and in the woods, it seemed as if the very trees would clap their hands, and everybody seemed to rejoice that Harry had found the Christ. Then brother was kept busy writing to friends who had been praying for eight years with him for my conversion.

Now as I am a Christian I felt that I must find some work that a Christian man could do, so corresponded with a man in Chicago to go on the road for them as a drummer.

While waiting for the answer from this firm God began to lay a burden on my heart for other men and women who were down in sin; to testify before them and tell them that the God who had saved me could save them; and the burden got so heavy on my heart that I couldn't rest till I had said to Him, "Though this position is given to me, if you want me to give the rest of my life telling of the great things you have done for me in saving me I will start out this spring with my brother in his evangelistic work."

A few days later the letter came offering me the place with a hundred dollars and expenses. I said, "Jim, what would you do?" He said, "Take it to God in prayer," and as I took it to God in prayer all I could see was a lost world, and thousands of men in the same life I had been, till I settled it there, once and for all, that it was not money or wealth I wanted, but God's smile and souls.

# FROM SINKING SANDS

By

Evangelist **Harry J. Elliott**

## CHAPTER 15 MY FIRST REVIVAL SERVICE

Two months after my conversion, my brother's wife's father went home to glory. Brother now took up his evangelistic work again. He accepted a call to Frankstown, the meeting to be held in a large schoolhouse.

Not having sung any religious songs previous to my conversion, the gospel hymns were new to me, but I learned to sing a few. One was, "Lord, I'm coming home." Before going into the service Jim said he would preach, Isa would play, and I would help in the song service and sing the invitation hymn, "Lord, I'm coming home."

The schoolhouse was packed and while brother preached some people almost cried aloud. Then Jim gave me the tip that it was time to sing an invitation hymn, and as we were finishing up on the chorus after the first stanza, six young ladies got up and I thought were going to leave the schoolhouse. Instead they came weeping their way to the bench in front of the platform and fell on their knees, crying to God to forgive their sins. I fell on my knees and began to cry with them. Jim said, "We will sing the second verse." I thought that was meant for me, that I was out of my place, so I began on the second verse, when half a dozen men also came to the mourners' bench and began to cry. I threw my song book away for I could sing no more, and fell at the mourners' bench with them. After some praying and weeping the seekers began to spring to their feet one by one and cry out, "Thank God, I am saved; I am so happy," and I felt myself that I was saved all over again.

I said to Jim, "Do they come to the altar this way every place we will go?" He said, "No, Harry; some places they do not want anything to do with Christ."

I thought that was awful, for if one sermon was enough for me, after the life I had lived, good moral people ought to come before they have hardly heard the sermon through; but I wasn't in the work very long before I found that what brother Jim said was true.

## **FROM SINKING SANDS**

By

Evangelist **Harry J. Elliott**

### **CHAPTER 16 AT COLORADO SPRINGS**

Brother's next call was to Colorado Springs to assist in a convention in the People's mission, and he took me along with him. I went out into my first street meeting and while they were singing the first hymn I thought, what was the use of wasting so much time. Why don't they give a man a chance to tell what God has done for him. After a few songs and prayer, Rev. Mr. Lee said "Harry, who has just been converted from a life of gambling, will give his first testimony on the street."

I thought sure everybody would believe me when I told them what great things had been done for me, but while some looked interested, a great many hurried back and forth and paid no attention, any more than if I had not been there.

After the meeting we marched to the hall, and it looked like everybody preached, and I couldn't stand it any longer. I thought I had a right to tell what Jesus had done for me; so Jim introduced me to the people and said, "This is my brother Harry, for whom some of you have prayed for years," and it looked for awhile as if the meeting was going to be broken up, for some of the men came and hugged me and wept, and said, "Yes, I have prayed for you for years," and some of the good sisters - I didn't know what they were going to do when they came toward me, but they acted almost as bad as the men.

In this convention they were preaching that after you were converted you could be cleansed from the old carnal nature, the body of sin, the "old man." I enjoyed everything the preacher preached about, but when he would say, "All those who were sanctified after you were converted, as a second work of grace, stand," I never stood on that proposition.

But whenever they asked for any one to stand who got a sky-blue case of conversion and knew the work was done, and were ready to die, I would stand.

One dear sister in the convention seemed to be much more interested in my case than any other, and she came and said, "Brother Harry, you ought to go to the altar and ask God to cleanse that thing out of your heart that makes you angry." I said, "Sister, what do you mean?" "Well," she said, "don't you get angry?" I said, "No, I don't get angry." "Well," she said, "you ought to get that thing taken out of your heart that makes you want to go back to the world." I replied, "Sister, I haven't got the kind of religion you are talking about. I haven't the least desire to go back to the gambling hell, or to the world, and leave my Christ," for I was never so happy in my life as hearing the gospel, seeing people converted, hearing the testimonies, and being in that convention.

# FROM SINKING SANDS

By

Evangelist **Harry J. Elliott**

## CHAPTER 17 THE "OLD MAN" SHOWS HIMSELF

My brother's next meeting was to be in a tent at Perry Park, beginning June 7th. This was now four months since my conversion. We went early enough to put up the tent ourselves, as it was his own tent; so on the night of the sixth the tent was up, seats in, platform built, and everything in readiness for the meeting which should begin the next evening.

If you ever saw a happy young man it was this boy. After the tent was up I walked around it, for I had never been under a gospel tent before. I had been under a circus tent many a time previous to my conversion; but this seemed to be the finest tent I had ever seen.

Before retiring that night we all got together and prayed that God would convict men and women, save souls, and sanctify believers, and give us a great meeting. I went to bed and dreamed all night about our first tent meeting and got up in the morning, and wondered who would be our first seeker; but it wasn't long before we found out who it was.

At the breakfast table a little boy about nine years old said something to me, and before I knew it something rose up in my heart that made me fly off the handle. I left the table and went out in the yard. When Jim came out he found me weeping. I said, "Jim, I'm the meanest man on earth. I thought I was converted. What made me act that way at the table?" He said, "Harry, that was the 'old man,' the carnal mind that we have been preaching about." I said, "Jim, tell me how to get rid of it." He said, "Come on down to the tent." I went down, and after instruction from Jim I fell in the straw and cried unto God if He could possibly deliver me to do so, and not very long afterward I had the sweet peace in my heart again. Then I said, "Now I want that thing taken out of my heart," and Jim prayed and I prayed, and I asked God to take the damnable thing out of my heart. It was not long after that prayer the thing was gone, and it seemed to me that all heaven was rejoicing when God sanctified me.

Since that time till the present I have been out on the battle field, with the exception of a few times when I have been laid aside with broken nerves, telling men and women that there is power in the blood to save from the uttermost to the very uttermost.

Some have said, "Elliott, don't you ever get tired of the way? Do you ever want a taste of the old life again?" I am always able to answer them, "No, for I find nothing that equals this way of salvation."

Let me exhort you, if you have not already become a Christian, to seek the Lord now before you do anything else. It will not take God long to make you a new creature, and old things will pass away and all things become new. It is now fifteen years since Cod for Christ's sake forgave me my sins and made me one of His sons and I have been enjoying His presence ever since. One year and a half

after, God called me to give my time to evangelistic work, which I am doing and enjoying at this time. God also gave me a Christian woman to be my wife and she has been more than that in helping me in my ministry. We also have three children living and one in heaven waiting for us. May the God of all grace bless the readers of this book.

Yours for soul saving, **EVANGELIST HARRY JOSEPH ELLIOTT.**